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## **NEWS**

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**  
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# **PREPAREDNESS PRESENTS ARE GREAT FOR HOLIDAY GIVING**

Presents to promote preparedness can make gift-giving fun and meaningful. Along with traditional gifts of toys and bling, a new crank powered flashlight and a safety kit for the car can help further safety while providing something different to unwrap during the holidays.

For holiday and year 'round safety and preparedness, many supplies for stocking an emergency kit are one-size fits all and will last all year long. There are many useful, safety-oriented gifts that are affordable, even fun, and just might be needed in the coming months.

Who can forget the past winter when the first heavy snow came in mid-December and then the state was buried by back-to-back blizzards in February? Those who found weather radios and some good board games among their holiday gifts could really appreciate them around February 9.

Delaware Emergency Management Agency officials encourage families and friends to include in the holiday season the importance of being prepared. It's a great time to make a plan and build a kit as part of holiday activities.

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Federal Emergency Management Administrator Craig Fugate also encourages families to think preparedness this time of year. "With winter right around the corner, it's never too early to start preparing for snowstorms, icy roads, and other types of severe weather," Fugate said. "Whether you live in an area that is used to severe winters or not, there are three simple steps all Americans should take to get ready: put together an emergency supply kit, develop a family communications plan, and stay informed about the risks and emergencies in your community."

Holiday packages filled with supplies for emergency preparedness kits or handy tools for household and travel safety will be welcome many times throughout the year. Snow or no snow, Delaware is likely to have flooding in some areas, power outages here and there, and possibly some wind and rain courtesy of a tropical storm or nor'easter. Local hardware and department stores and catalogues offer practical, useful, and entertaining items that any family can use in an emergency.

Bright gifts of light are always welcome and the variety of flashlights and lanterns that are available come in all sizes and styles. Flashlights that don't require batteries are common and light devices can be found to hold in your hand, fasten to the brim of a cap, hang on a key chain or clip to a jacket zipper pull. Less practical, but esthetically pleasing, the ambiance of scented candles can even be enjoyed without the risk of open flames since wax candles that have flickering battery-operated wicks are now available.

Many emergency or camping lanterns and portable radios include adapters for charging cell phones. Some are powered by cranking and some also include solar energy collection panels. When shopping for portable radios, it is always a good idea to find one that receives National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather station signals. NOAA Weather Radio is the voice of the National Weather Service. General use and weather radios that have alternate power sources are available in most local electronic and hardware stores and come in a range of affordable prices. The weather radio makes a good companion to local radio and television bulletins and updates.

A combination crank-powered radio and flashlight/lantern makes a great gift for those family members or friends that might not have the means to fully stock an emergency supply kit.

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Being prepared for emergencies is serious, but DEMA officials remind the public that you can have quality family time with a serious subject. Having the entire family working together by planning and assembling supplies for emergencies allows everyone to add items that they think are important. Our children can take a role and be an integral part of the team as the family creates a plan for safety and peace of mind.

Assembling a gift of basic emergency supplies for someone in need also sets a great example for giving.

Even though unwrapping a smoke alarm may be about as exciting as finding that quality manual can opener in the stocking, one can save your life and the other can give you access to soup for you and food for your pets if the electricity is out. Useful preparedness gifts and some good cookies can make a big contribution to holiday high spirits. Be imaginative, be creative, but be safe and prepared this holiday season.

Fugate joins DEMA in reminding people that besides severe winter weather, disasters can strike anytime, anywhere, which is why it's important to be prepared year 'round wherever you live.

Remember, the first 72 hours are on you: Every household should have enough supplies to sustain people and pets for at least three days in case of emergencies that impede travel and interrupt power. Emergency management officials suggest extending your emergency supplies and being prepared to be self-sustaining for up to four days to ensure that you are safe and comfortable while responders take care of those in dire need.

For more information on creating a family emergency plan and stocking a kit, visit the DEMA website, [www.dema.delaware.gov](http://www.dema.delaware.gov), the Delaware Citizen Corps website, [www.delawarecitizencorps.org](http://www.delawarecitizencorps.org) or [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

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